

Poster presentations in Translation Studies State of the art and seven tips for improvement

Laura Ivaska, University of Turku
Ester Torres-Simón, Universitat Rovira i Virgili

Abstract

Poster presentations have established themselves in hard and social sciences, but remain an undervalued asset in Translation Studies (TS). In this paper, we report on a survey (n=104) that we carried out to map TS scholars' behavior and preferences regarding poster and oral presentations in conferences. Based on the results, we argue that the full potential of posters as a tool for disseminating research results, getting feedback and networking with colleagues has not been realized in TS. Although the role of posters in facilitating these interactions is acknowledged in the survey responses, the results also reveal that poster presenters are often underprepared: they have not studied making posters nor do they rehearse presenting the poster beforehand. Having identified this lack of preparation, we provide tips for making and presenting engaging posters. In addition, we discuss issues that conference organizers could pay attention to when organizing poster sessions. We hope to encourage more TS scholars to present posters in future conferences by suggesting that the visibility of posters can be harnessed to attract new audiences and to initiate meaningful interactions.

Keywords: Translation Studies, conferences, presentations, posters, dynamics of research dissemination

1 Posters in Translation Studies

An academic poster – presenting research data or results in the form of a (printed) poster – is an established type of scientific communication. In the context of conferences, where scholars share research results and interact and network with other academics (cf. Waehler & Welch 1995; Rowe & Ilic 2015), posters are not envisaged as stand-alone pieces. Rather, they are accompanied by the presenter(s). There are various types of poster sessions. In this paper, we focus on the format that is the most common in Translation Studies (TS): several posters are on display simultaneously during a specific time slot and participants move around freely to check the posters and to talk with the presenters.

The first poster sessions were organized in the late 1960s (Rowe & Ilic 2015; Pedwell *et al.* 2016). Today, posters have established themselves in the hard and social sciences but are not as common in the humanities. When it comes to TS, an Internet search shows

that several major conferences accept (or even encourage) poster presentations; for example, the European Society for Translation Studies (EST) congress has had a poster session since 2002 and the International Association for Translation and Intercultural Studies (IATIS) conference since 2015. Some smaller-scale conferences—such as the Conference on Research into the Didactics of Translation (didTRAD) 2014–16, the Advancing Research in Translation and Interpreting Studies (ARTIS) event held at the University of Ajou in South Korea in 2017, and the KäTu Symposium for Translation and Interpreting Studies since at least 2014—allocate space for posters. All in all, it seems that posters are being introduced into more and more TS conferences. To shed more light on the current situation within TS, we carried out an online survey on TS scholars' approaches to poster and oral presentations. Previously, similar research has been carried out in the fields of Economics and Pediatrics (Rowe 2019), but not in TS. Based on the survey results we obtained, we feel the need to discuss the purpose of poster presentations and how to effectively design and present them.

In Section 2, we report on the aforementioned survey, which shows how TS scholars (n=104) behave at conferences. The survey revealed that only 41% of the respondents had experience in designing and presenting posters. Therefore, Section 3 is devoted to practical tips on how to succeed in designing a poster; the tips are based on a literature review and our own experiences. In addition, drawing on the responses to the survey and the literature review, we argue that the effectiveness of posters is also influenced by how poster sessions are organized. Therefore Section 4 focuses on issues that conference organizers should consider when planning a poster session. In Section 5, we conclude the article by arguing that poster presentations can be useful not only for individual scholars, but also for TS as a discipline.

2 Report on the survey

We carried out an online survey among TS scholars to figure out what kind of expectations and preferences they have regarding oral and poster presentations at TS conferences, and to find explanations for their preferences. The survey¹ consisted of 75 multiple-choice questions and two open questions. The link to the online survey was distributed through Facebook TS groups, Twitter, and the EST newsletter, and was open for four weeks in November–December 2018. We received 104 valid responses. The respondents' age ranged from 20 to 72 years (mean: 40; median: 38) and they occupied a range of academic positions (19% held a tenured position, 31% held a non-tenured position, 34% were students and 16% were researchers). Their research interests covered the different subfields of TS proposed in the survey (with process research being the most represented [31%] and terminology [8%] and ethics [8%] the least represented), suggesting that our respondents came from various research paradigms. The sample can thus be considered at least somewhat representative of the different traditions within TS.

Only 41% of the respondents had ever presented a poster. No strong correlations were found between the above variables (age, academic position and subfield of research) and

¹ Available at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/12Xf3siDKi9XZozO1QBHv8fE8KHVGfxsd/view>

a preference for or aversion to poster presentations. Respondents considered oral presentations more effective for research dissemination and CV building than poster presentations; we believe that this is because the essence and potential of posters is not currently fully appreciated in TS. However, poster and oral presentations were considered equally valid tools for networking.² Similarly, Nicholas Rowe (2019: 77) found that among economics and pediatrics scholars, poster presentations are regarded as a good way to network with fellow conference delegates while oral presentations are considered more valuable in terms of career development. He also found that posters are considered twice as relevant a presentation medium when the author actually presents them as compared with stand-alone posters (Rowe 2019: 71)—in our view, posters should always be accompanied by the presenter(s), as that is the best way to ensure meaningful networking.

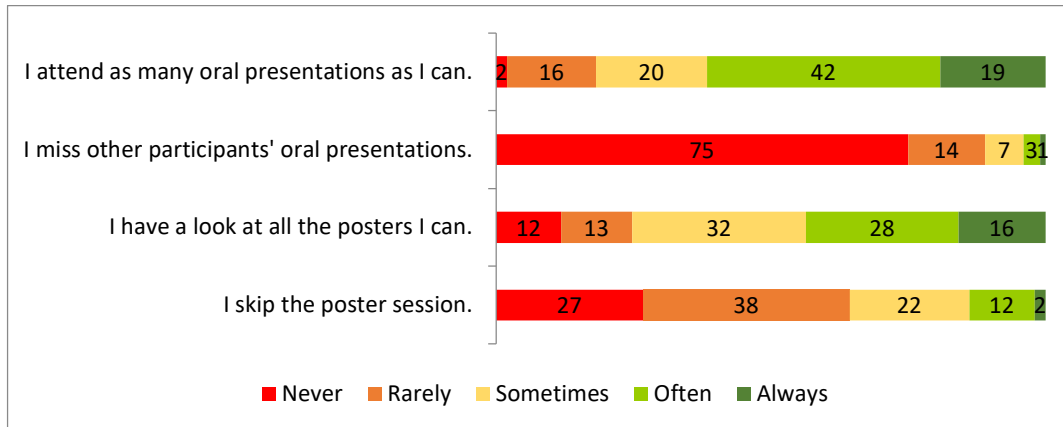
2.1 Conference participants' point of view

2.1.1 Attending oral vs. poster presentations

Respondents were asked to indicate whether proposed scenarios, such as “I attend as many oral presentations as I can,” correspond with their conference behavior on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is “never,” 2 is “rarely,” 3 is “sometimes,” 4 is “often” and 5 is “always.” In general, the responses indicate an interest towards other people’s work, as 42% of the respondents told they often attend as many oral presentations as possible, and 19% always do so (Figure 1). People move around to attend the most interesting presentations. Only on rare occasions some might choose to attend an oral presentation because of the room it has been assigned (Figure 3). However, interest towards poster presentations is lower: only 28% of the respondents often check as many posters as possible, and 16% always do so (Figure 1). Similarly, while 75% of the respondents claimed that they always attend other participants’ oral presentations, only 27% said they never skip the poster session.

² More detailed results are presented and discussed in a manuscript under preparation by Ester Torres-Simón & Laura Ivaska provisionally titled “Myths and realities of poster presentations.”

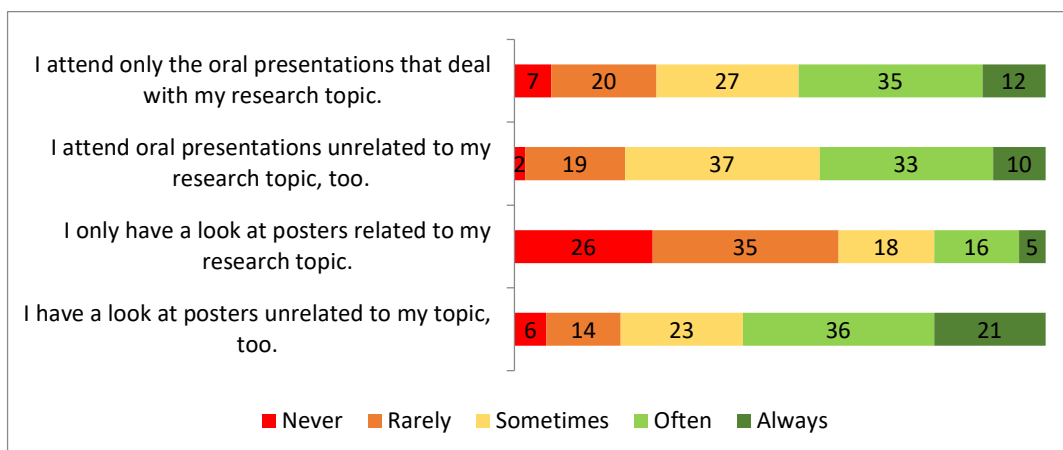
Figure 1. Frequency of attending oral and poster presentations (n=104).



2.1.2 Which presentations conference participants attend and why

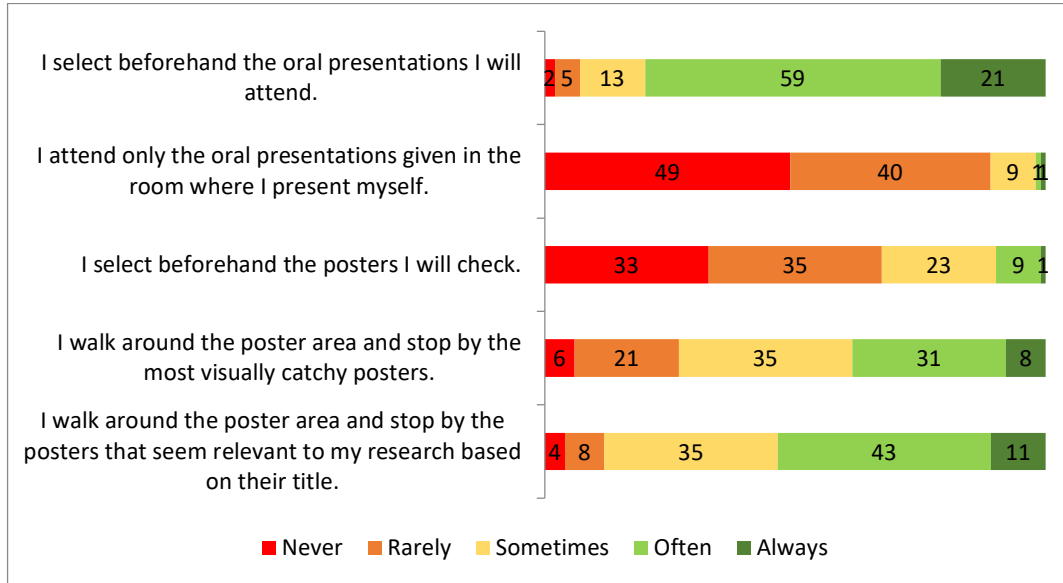
Although poster presentations attract fewer conference participants than oral presentations do, the respondents who do attend poster presentations are likely to check a wide range of posters: 57% report that they often or always check posters that are not related to their own research topic—as compared with 43% doing so with oral presentations (Figure 2). That is, poster presentations are likely to attract a more varied audience. This may be partly explained by the fact that in contrast to oral sessions, poster sessions do not usually have competing parallel sessions.

Figure 2. Frequency of attending presentations related and unrelated to participants' own research topics (n=104).



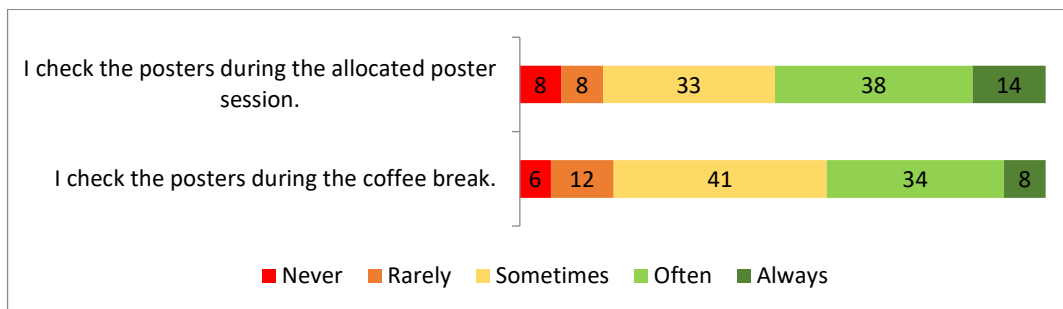
While 80% of the respondents report that they often or always choose which oral presentations to attend beforehand, only 10% do so with posters (Figure 3). In fact, 33% of the respondents choose spontaneously which posters to check. 54% often or always check posters based on whether the title seems relevant, and 39% always or often stop by posters with catchy visuals. In other words, the title and the visuals might play a part in attracting audience to one's poster.

Figure 3. Reasons for attending presentations (n=104).



Posters are usually presented during a dedicated poster session, and that is when 52% of the respondents always or often check the posters. However, 42% of the respondents say they check posters also during coffee breaks (Figure 4), which implies that posters should have some stand-alone consistency. This finding might be relevant also for organizing poster sessions, as will be discussed in Section 4.

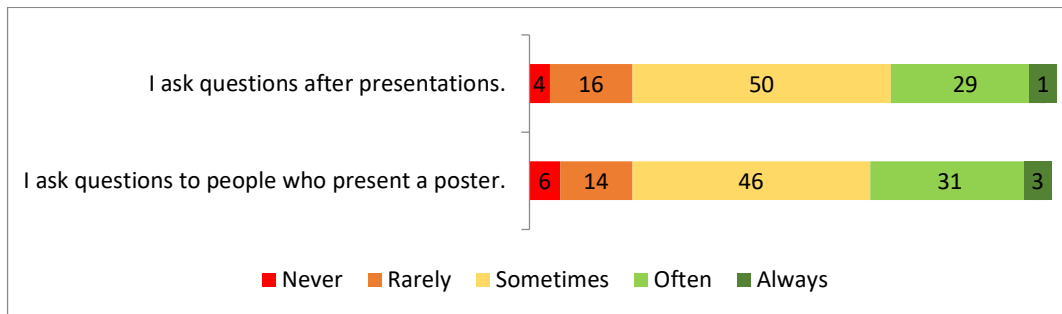
Figure 4. Engaging with posters during the poster session and coffee breaks (n=104).



2.1.3 Conference participants' interaction with presenters

One important aspect of presenting at conferences is to receive feedback and questions from the audience. Oral and poster presentations seem to generate questions in equal measures: in both cases, around 30% of the respondents always or often make questions to the presenter and another circa 50% do so sometimes, while only 20% rarely or never ask questions (Figure 5). In other words, both presentation types are good at achieving one of the most important goals of attending conferences, that is, creating interaction.

Figure 5. Making questions to presenters (n=104).



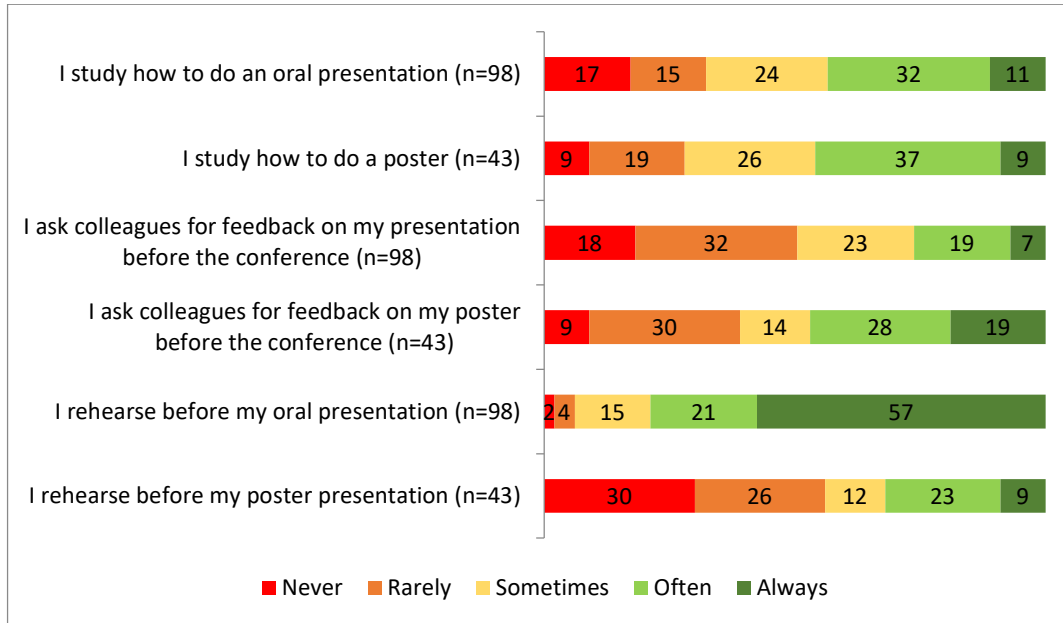
2.2 Presenters' point of view

The results presented above in Section 2.1 concern general conference behavior, and all respondents answered these questions. After this, the respondents who had experience in both oral or poster presentations answered all the remaining questions, while those who had experience only in oral presentations skipped questions regarding posters and vice versa: of the 104 respondents, 98 (or 94%) had given an oral presentation, and 43 (41%) had presented a poster. All the respondents who had presented a poster had experience also in oral presentations.

2.2.1 Training and preparation

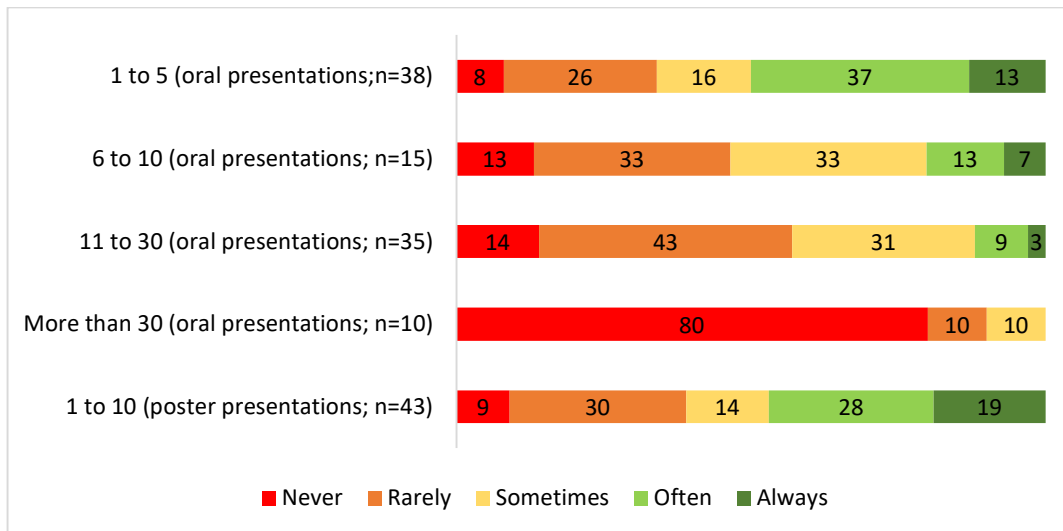
We asked how much training respondents have in preparing oral and poster presentations (Figure 6). We used the verb “to study” because we wanted an open concept that includes also informal learning and self-learning. The results show that participants have similar access to or interest in learning how to present posters and how to give oral presentations: 28% never or rarely study how to make a poster, while the corresponding figure for oral presentations is 32%.

Figure 6. Preparing for oral and poster presentations.



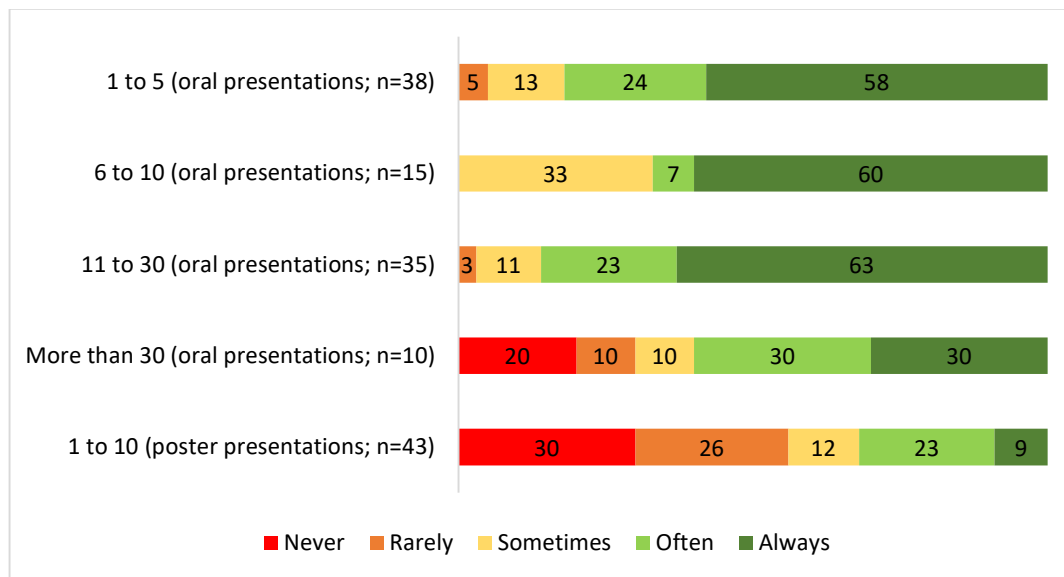
One way in which one can prepare for a conference presentation is to ask colleagues or peers for feedback. About half of the respondents (50% for oral and 39% for poster presentations) never or rarely do so. However, if we break down the results by experience, the picture changes slightly: the less experienced the presenter is, the more likely they are to ask feedback from colleagues (Figure 7). Half (50%) of the researchers who have given a maximum of five oral presentations report that they often or always ask for feedback beforehand. Figures are similar with the less experienced poster presenters and their tendency to ask for feedback beforehand.

Figure 7. Asking for feedback on presentations broken down by experience in presenting.



While asking for feedback is not very common, on average 78% of the respondents always or often rehearse before an oral presentation (Figure 6). However, there is, again, some variation that correlates with experience: only a few percent of the presenters who have given less than 30 oral presentations report that they never or rarely rehearse, as compared with 30% of the respondents who have given more than 30 presentations (Figure 8). With poster presentations, the figures are different: only 32% of the respondents rehearse always or often, and 30% never do so (as compared with only 2% of the respondents giving oral presentations) (Figure 6). The results indicate that scholars presenting posters are not aware of the need to rehearse, and that there is a general need for more training in preparing poster presentations.

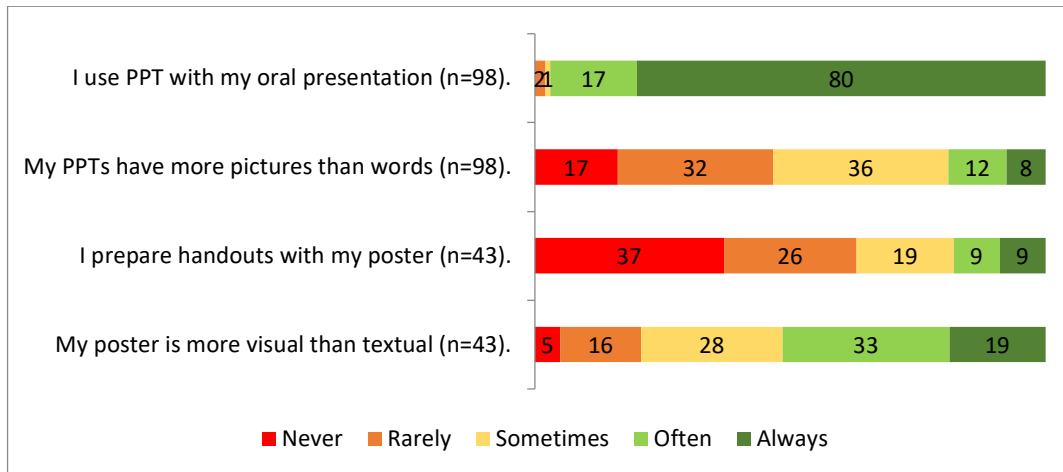
Figure 8. Rehearsing presentations broken down by experience in presenting.



2.2.2 Visual and written support materials

There are also differences in whether presentations are mainly visual or textual and in the kind of supporting materials used. Almost all respondents (97%) often or always use a PowerPoint (PPT) or similar to support their oral presentations (Figure 9). 18% of poster presenters prepare also handouts to distribute to the audience, but we did not ask if oral presenters have handouts. Although the literature review suggests that posters should be first and foremost visual, only 42% of the respondents state that their posters are always or often more visual than textual. In the case of PowerPoints accompanying oral presentations, only 20% say that they always or often have more pictures than words. These results suggest that TS scholars need more training in harnessing visuality to help deliver their message.

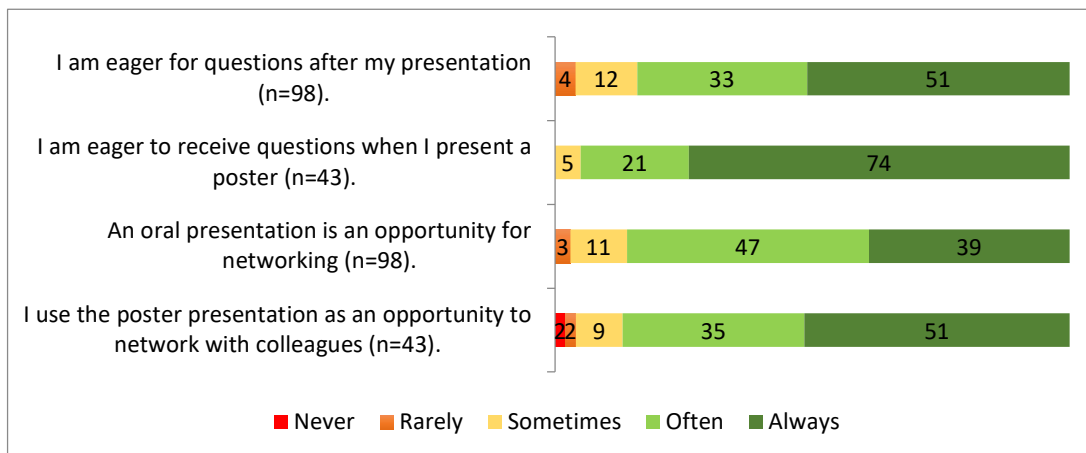
Figure 9. Using visual and written support with presentations.



2.2.3 Expectations regarding questions and networking opportunities during presentations

Presenters are very eager to receive questions after—or in the case of posters, during—their presentations. Poster presenters seem to be slightly more eager for interaction; 74% are always eager to receive questions in comparison to 51% of oral presenters (Figure 10). This is in line with what we expect posters to offer: a possibility not only to disseminate research results, but also to interact, get feedback and network. In fact, respondents consider both types of presentations a good opportunity for networking, with poster presentations having a slightly higher percentage of respondents claiming that this is always the case (51% vs. 39% for oral presentations). All in all, presentations are considered a chance to make new acquaintances.

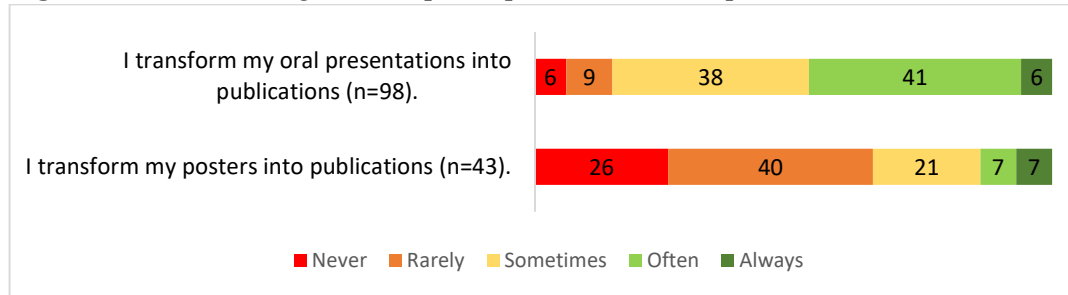
Figure 10. Eagerness of presenters to answer questions and to use presentations as an opportunity for networking.



2.2.4 Transforming presentations into publications

Respondents seem more likely to turn oral presentations into publications, such as articles, than poster presentations: 47% of respondents claim to often or always turn oral presentations into publications as compared with only 14% of poster presenters (Figure 11). However, we did not ask how often oral and poster presentations are used to present results that have already been published or to showcase early-stage projects that are not ready to be published as such. Similarly, the survey did not consider whether posters per se are published. In any case, TS posters seem to rarely get an afterlife.

Figure 11. Transforming oral and poster presentations into publications.



2.3 Summary of main differences between oral and poster presentations

TS scholars find both poster and oral presentations useful tools for networking and disseminating research results. There are, however, some differences in the way they are attended and performed. First, conference participants choose to attend oral presentations on the basis of similar research interests and schedules, whereas posters are more likely to be checked even if they do not relate to the respondents' own research. Posters are also checked outside the poster session. This implies that posters gain a more varied audience. Catchy visuals and titles may have a role in attracting participants' attention. Second, researchers are less aware of the importance for rehearsal and the use of support materials when it comes to posters as compared with oral presentations. However, despite the lack of preparation, poster presenters are more eager to receive questions than oral presenters, suggesting they expect posters to offer better opportunities to get feedback and to network. Last, respondents think that oral presentations are more likely to lead into publications than poster presentations.

3 Seven tips for a poster presentation

According to the survey results, posters are a secondary option for TS scholars. The majority of the respondents has never presented one. This may be explained by a lack of knowledge and tools necessary to design and present a poster. With these findings in mind, we provide some tips for creating a poster that serves as a tool for communication, networking, and disseminating research in a TS conference. We focus first on content selection (Tips 1–3). Then, we discuss some visual aspects of posters (Tips 4–6) before

moving onto considerations regarding giving a poster presentation (Tip 7). The seven tips are based on a literature review and exemplified with our own experiences in creating and presenting successful posters at the EST 2016 congress: Ivaska was awarded the best poster prize for her poster (Figure 13), and Torres-Simón's poster (Figure 12) was explicitly mentioned in the closing panel of the congress. Naturally, the ultimate success of a conference presentation depends on its scientific contribution. However, careful planning when preparing the presentation can help deliver the message to the audience.

3.1 Tip 1: Draft a catchy title

Draft a title that communicates the topic of the poster succinctly. Poster presentations are likely to attract random visitors (Figure 1), and the title of the poster may have a decisive role in this (Figure 3). Good titles may simply ask or answer questions (Block 1996). According to Christopher Madan (2015: 3), “[q]uestion-based titles are more likely to engage the reader to think about the research question for themselves,” which is good, because “people remember more about information they think about elaboratively.” Kendall Powell (2016: 114) suggests to “[m]ake the title the punchline of the research—and make it intriguing.” Titles of a maximum of ten words are catchy, but succinctness should not come at the price of informativeness (cf. Taggart & Arslanian 2000). A title such as “Uncovering the many sources of translations” (Ivaska 2016) fits the ten-word rule, at the same time giving enough information for meaningful engagement and creating curiosity (“uncovering”); the subtitle “Indirect translations of Modern Greek prose literature into Finnish 1952–2004” provides a more academic presentation of the topic, while also revealing that the scope of the title is quite wide to be fully covered in a poster.

3.2 Tip 2: Make interesting conclusion(s)

Design your poster around a take-home message. According to Madan (2015: 4), people are more likely to remember the ending than how exactly they got there, which means that the conclusions should recap the core message of the poster. Similarly, when reaching unexpected audiences and popularizing research—which is often the case with TS posters (Figure 1)—Betty Dubois (1985: 81) suggests that “the minimal content [of a poster] is results or results and conclusion, with nothing else.” A title that matches the conclusions helps deliver the take-home message, which should be understandable and short enough to be internalized without great effort, ideally also by scholars who are not working on the exact topic of the poster. For example, Torres-Simón (2016) claimed in her poster that “[i]f Wikipedia reflects the wisdom of the crowd, we should invest some time in reaching the general public and giving visibility to other forms and shapes of translation,” which connects with the title of the poster “The concept of translation in Wikipedia,” summarizes the main findings, and invites the audience to take action.


3.3 Tip 3: Keep it brief

Keep the text on the poster as concise as possible, preferably at a maximum of 300–500 words. This helps to ensure that the take-home message does not get lost in unnecessary noise. A poster is a visual representation of one aspect of one’s research, not a detailed, in-depth article or a monograph. In other words, the message needs to be “sharpened, pared down, and honed” (MacIntosh-Murray 2007: 371). A case study by Charles Waehler & Andrea A. Welch (1995: 727) also shows that the audience values “[c]larity of writing, along with brevity and conciseness.” However, as posters may be visited also outside the poster session, for example during coffee breaks (Figure 4), the poster should tell a coherent story that is understandable also on its own. For example, Ivaska’s (2016) poster is roughly 300 words: the methodology is presented as a list of keywords and references to leave more space for evidence and to invite the audience to engage the presenter in a conversation on the methodology.

3.4 Tip 4: Visualize your topic

Use photos or other visual elements to communicate the topic of the poster and to make the poster attracting, interesting and memorable. Madan (2015: 4) suggests that people remember pictures better than words. Therefore, using the right kind of visuals makes your poster and your research easier to remember. Catchy visuals can also help grab the attention of scholars working on topics different from that of the poster (Figure 3). For example, Torres-Simón (2016) mimicked Wikipedia’s well-known page layout to introduce attendants to the topic of her poster and to attract passersby’s attention (Figure 12), while Ivaska (2016) used a map of Europe to visualize the geographical extent of her case study (Figure 13).

Figure 12. Ester Torres-Simón (2016): The conceptualization of translation in Wikipedia. Poster presented at the EST 2016 congress in Aarhus, Denmark.



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data collection

- January 2015
- 93 languages
- Google Translate
- Online dictionaries
- Informers
- Bottom-up analysis
- Keywords & topics

languages (by size)

- Македонски >70kB
- English
- Українська 50-70kB
- עברית
- O'zbekcha/ўзбекча
- Polski
- Русский
- 한국어 30-50kB
- Català
- Français
- Español
- Latviesu
- Suomi

80 more

some clichés

- Traduttore, traditore
- Belles infidèles
- Translation is art

Wikipedia problems

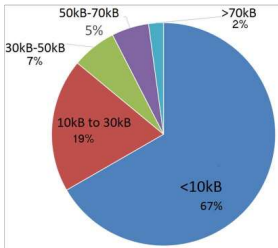
- Groupthink situation (English version)
- Self promotion (English, Persian, Bengali, Italian)
- Editing war (English)

The conceptualization of translation in Wikipedia

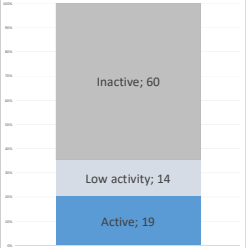
From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

This **research** analyzed how **translation** is approached in Wikipedia. It covers the 93 languages of Wikipedia that have an entry for this concept, out of possible 293 languages. It looks at size, activity and images of translation, as well as main topics in all articles and keywords in small-sized articles.

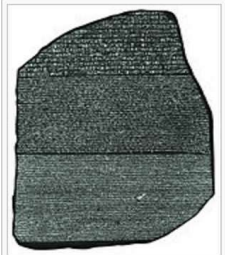
1. Overview



Size of Wikipedia entries on translation



Level of activity in Wikipedia entries on translation



The Rosetta Stone is the most common image used to represent translation: it appears in 46 entries out of 51 with a picture (90%)

2. Main concepts in all languages

After a bottom-up analysis, the most common topics in all entries were:

- 56% Machine or human translation?
- 42% Translation types (legal, literary, audiovisual...)
- 40% Local history of translation (usually bible translation and literary translation)
- 40% Mistranslations and bad translations
- 39% Professional status of translation
- 32% Translation strategies
- 18% L1 translation
- 16% Translation associations
- 3% Ethics

3. Keywords in short articles (<1Kb)

There are 18 wikis with less than 1,000 bytes. These wikis define translation with the words:

OTHER 100% ,TEXT 89% , PERSON 67% , MOTHER TONGUE 22%


And either: MEANING 33%, COMMUNICATION 39% OR TRANSFER 28%


4. Conclusions

Wikipedia offers a classical presentation of translation: locally recognized interlingual activity, done by humans into their mother tongue - still with mistakes because translation is a literary form of art, but better than Machine Translation. This definition is far away from the professional practice and established academic research.

If Wikipedia is a crowd wisdom influencer, researchers should invest some time in including other forms of translation in Wikipedia. If Wikipedia reflects the wisdom of the crowd, we should invest some time in reaching the general public and giving visibility to other forms and shapes of translation.

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Figure 13. Laura Ivaska (2016): Uncovering the many source texts of translations: Indirect translations of Modern Greek prose literature into Finnish 1952–2004. Poster presented at the EST 2016 congress in Aarhus, Denmark.³

Uncovering the Many Source Texts of Translations

Indirect translations of Modern Greek prose literature into Finnish 1952–2004

Laura Ivaska | University of Turku
laura.ivaska@utu.fi

A Claim

Indirect and eclectic translation are more common than we think.

Material

22 (in)direct prose translations from Modern Greek into Finnish 1952–2004

Methodology

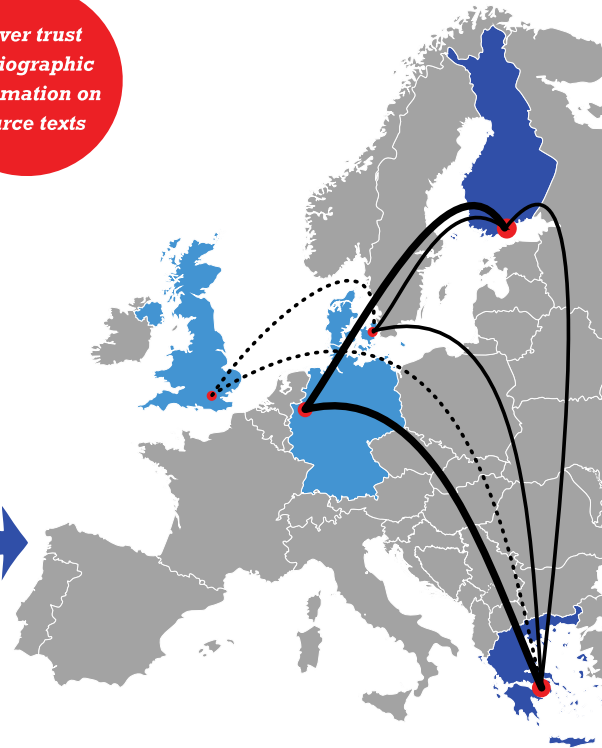
Translation archaeology (Pym 1998)
Translator archives (Munday 2013)
Paratext (Genette 1991)

Example

The Finnish translation *Ikuinen aurinko* of Pandelis Prevelakis' *O ήλιος του θανάτου*:

- ▶ According to *Fennica Bibliography*, the Finnish translation is based on the German translation *Die Sonne des Todes*.
- ▶ However, in a newspaper article the Finnish translator Villa (1966) writes how "towards the end of the translation work, when I had to figure out the contradictions between the German and the Danish translation, and I could not understand much of the original, I corresponded with the author" (my translation).
- ▶ Furthermore, in a letter to the author the Danish translator Olsen (1961) writes: "thank you very much for Philip Sherrard's translation of *The Sun of Death* [...] As I read the book I found out that many words were unknown to me and that I could not find them in my Greek dictionaries. The English edition will be of great help to me when I come across such words. But, of course, the Greek version will form the basis of my translation of your book into Danish," *Dødens sol*.

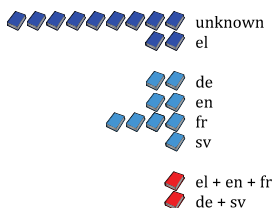
Never trust
bibliographic
information on
source texts



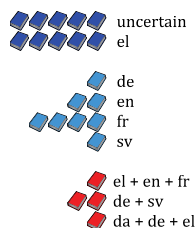
The genealogy of the Finnish translation of Pandelis Prevelakis' *O ήλιος του θανάτου*.

The Finnish translation is based primarily on the German translation, which was translated from the Greek original, but the Finnish translator used also the Greek original and the Danish translation as sources. The Danish translation, in turn, is based primarily on the original in Greek, but uses also the English translation as source.

Source texts of Greek–Finnish translations according to *Fennica Bibliography* (Jan 2016)



Source texts of Greek–Finnish translations according to ongoing research (Aug 2016)



Conclusions & Discussion

Indirect and eclectic translation are more common than bibliographic information suggests.

Archival material and paratexts can help trace the source texts used by translators.

Is indirectness obscured in bibliographic information because of its negative reputation?

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3.5 Tip 5: Attract and guide readers with(out) colors

Use only two or three colors—including colors in graphs and other visual elements—to attract and guide readers. Use colors purposefully to highlight the most important parts of the poster, to relay your topic and message and to bring clarity into the layout of the poster; for example, colors make reading graphs easier (Dubois 1985: 79). Remember that some participants may have color vision deficiencies, resulting in difficulties in distinguishing or seeing colors. Since Torres-Simón's (2016) topic is Wikipedia, her poster uses the same colors as the Wikipedia page, whereas Ivaska's (2016) poster on Modern Greek literature in Finnish translation uses the colors of the flags of Finland and Greece, white and different shades of blue, and a contrasting color, red, to highlight the most important details on the poster.

3.6 Tip 6: Keep the look simple and print it pro

Give your poster a clear structure and leave enough white (empty) space to make the most important information salient and to ensure that the poster is easy to read and remember (D'Angelo 2010: 44). When it comes to white spaces (margins and spacing), readability (font size and type), the type of grid,⁴ the size of the poster (A0 or something else) and the material on which to print the poster (paper, canvas, or other), there is no single truth. However, a simple rule of thumb is that your poster should be readable also in A4/letter-size—if not, the text is too small and will not be readable from a distance. To ensure readability, leave enough white space around texts and images, use a maximum of two font types (one serif and one sans serif⁵)—for example one for the headings and another for the body text—that are big enough in size, and make sure that the layout flows logically and the reader always knows where to read next. While it may be a good idea to avoid tables with strong, space breaking vertical lines, circles catch the passersby's eye. In posters the size (of fonts etc.) matters—bigger is better. Less content means that everything on the poster will stand out better.

According to Rhianna Pedwell *et al.* (2016: 2), posters are often ineffective due to the lack of peer review. With this in mind, give your poster a test run with colleagues or peers as your audience. Finally, if possible, print the poster professionally. Choose the material according to whether you plan to put the poster on display in your office after the conference or to upcycle it; notice also that canvas posters can be folded for travel and ironed before presenting, while some airlines might not allow unfolded paper posters onboard as hand luggage. You could also print the poster at the conference site. In any case, double check the size and type of the poster boards with the conference organization before printing the poster.

⁴ Grid is the skeleton of the page layout, consisting in (straight) lines that divide the page into even parts that help organize the contents so that they are easy to read and comprehend.

⁵ Some fonts have small strokes at the end of the larger strokes; these are called *serif* fonts. Fonts without such strokes usually have the word *sans* in their name, indicating the lack thereof.

3.7 Tip 7: Present your poster and encourage interaction

Be prepared to discuss the topic of your poster with the audience: posters are not just hung on the wall—they are presented. Most participants will ask you questions (Figure 5), so rehearse short walk-throughs of the poster and answers to the most likely questions in advance; these will also serve visually impaired participants. You can encourage passerby participation (especially if you cannot be at your poster the whole time it is on display) with the help of surveys, games, and other activities; for example, a survey next to Torres-Simón's poster at the EST 2016 congress prompted discussion throughout the congress up until the final remarks. Handouts with the main ideas or the take-home message and your contact information enhance networking. Online interaction can also be encouraged; this way your poster can reach audiences beyond the conference. Interaction can also continue beyond the conference if the poster is published; for example, the poster related to this paper, "Doing poster presentations: Report on a survey (and tips)" (Torres-Simón & Ivaska 2019), presented at KäTu 2019, was put online in the Universitat Rovira i Virgili's repository. Similarly, posters can also be turned into articles. Although only 14% of survey respondents report that they turn their posters always or often into publications—with 46% doing so with oral presentations (Figure 11)—there is nothing inherent about posters that prevent the authors from turning them into articles. Aaron Carroll *et al.* (2003) did not find any significant difference between how many poster and oral presentations in the field of pediatrics lead into publications. For example, Torres-Simón published the research on her EST 2016 poster as an article (Torres-Simón 2019) and the present article is also based on a poster (Torres-Simón & Ivaska 2019).

4 Organizing a poster session

Considering that the main purposes of conferences are to disseminate research results and to get feedback on them while networking, and that posters are a presentation type that can help achieve these objectives, we will now discuss how to organize a poster session so as to ensure its success.

4.1 Provide poster presenters with information about the poster session

Providing poster presenters with as many details as possible on the poster session can help them succeed with their presentations (cf. Price 2010: 36) and make sure they know the answers to the following questions: What is the size of the whole poster stand and that of the area onto which the poster will be attached? How will the posters be attached? Consider posting a photo of the poster stand to the conference website so that presenters know what to expect and can prepare accordingly (cf. Moore *et al.* 2001: 103). The color of the poster stand might influence color choices, and the height can influence other design choices, as it determines what part of the poster will be at eye's height and what will hang so low that it might be difficult to read. How long will the poster session last? Will the posters be on display before and/or after the session? The answers to these

questions will help the presenters decide how much information they will attempt to convey with their posters and in the discussions initiated by the posters, and whether the poster should be designed so that the message is understandable also when the presenter is not on the spot to answer questions. The possibility to publish posters, for example in the conference proceedings, should also be determined beforehand—if the posters are offered an afterlife, it is important to inform the presenters of this so that they can pay attention to including copyright credits in the posters, for example.

4.2 Organize a poster session that encourages interaction

Posters are just as much presentations as oral presentations, so make sure that they get the attention they deserve. Allocate enough time and space for the poster session(s) so that conference participants can view the posters without disturbing each other, presenters can deliver their message, and participants with mobility issues can circulate without problems. Consider how to circumvent the problems identified by Nicholas Rowe & Dragan Ilic (2015: 3665), who find that it may be

difficult to gain access to presenters [if] (a) there are [...] only short periods when they are present at their poster, (b) being present at their own poster prevents them engaging with other posters at the same time, and (c) high volumes of posters are on display at the same time.

Make the poster session attractive and pleasant for conference participants. Poster presentations are often expected to be more relaxed than oral presentations, which can be highlighted by offering coffee and/or wine, for example. This can help create a relaxed atmosphere, yet it does not need to be viewed as an attempt to market the poster session (cf. MacIntosh-Murray 2007: 369). According to the survey results, providing snacks during the poster session will not influence presenters' choice between oral and poster presentation. However, snacks may attract conference participants who would otherwise skip the poster session. All in all, organize the poster session so that it best serves the conference participants and presenters; for example, in a big conference, a poster session may offer an anticipated break after passively attending oral presentations, giving a possibility for a more interactive participation.

4.3 Make sure posters are viewed as legitimate research outputs

Include the titles and/or abstracts of the posters in the conference programme the same way you do with other types of presentations, and give certificates of attendance/ presenting to all presenters independent of their presentation format. If a best poster award is granted, the criteria for judging the posters should be set beforehand: Are the posters judged by a jury or by the conference participants, and how much emphasis will be placed on contents and how much on visuality? Visuality could be explicitly included to encourage presenters to pay attention to the potential that posters have in this respect.

Either way, the judgment criteria should draw upon and tell poster presenters what is expected of their posters.

5 Conclusions

Poster presentations are one way to disseminate research results and to encourage networking at conferences. Posters can be used to effectively popularize research, that is, to share information with other TS subfields, and thus to reach new audiences. Both the literature review and the survey results suggest that attractive visuals and curated content are the keys to success. A successful poster often has a catchy title and interesting conclusions that together form the take-home message the presenter wishes to convey. Concision and simplicity apply to both the content and the look of the poster: an effective poster is usually professionally printed, uses only two fonts and three colors and contains no more than 300–500 words. To ensure that the message gets delivered and to take advantage of the possibility to interact with colleagues, the poster should be accompanied by the author who engages the audience in a one-on-one interaction. The organizers can encourage more scholars to opt for a poster by providing clear information regarding the technical aspects of presenting a poster. Also, they can ensure the success of the poster session by carefully planning the timing and the venue.

In the future, we would like to see more poster sessions at TS conferences, because they can accommodate many kinds of presentations in a wide variety of topics, which encourages pluralism. This is of importance in a growing field like TS, which has been labeled also a “potentially fragmenting area” (Munday 2016: 26). While division into subfields is a natural result of growth, poster sessions could be used as a tool to maintain and encourage interaction between different subfields. Posters seem particularly fit to help initiate meaningful communication between scholars whose topics of interest are different from each other. The spontaneity involved in choosing which posters to check and the easiness of getting into dialogue with poster presenters are aspects in which posters excel as compared with other presentation formats. Therefore, we warmly invite and encourage more TS scholars to learn how to prepare poster presentations—hopefully our seven tips can be useful in creating and presenting posters that not only report research results, but also encourage meaningful interaction with colleagues both old and new.

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Authors

Laura Ivaska is Doctoral Candidate at the University of Turku. She is working on her PhD dissertation on indirect translation. She won the Best Poster Award at the 2016 European Society for Translation Studies (EST) congress in Aarhus. She has studied graphic design at the Karelia University of Applied Sciences and gives workshops on how to design posters.

email: laura.ivaska (at) utu.fi

Ester Torres-Simón is Visiting Professor at the Universitat Rovira i Virgili, where she coordinates the Masters in Professional Translation. Her poster was mentioned in the closing remarks of the 2016 European Society for Translation Studies (EST) congress in Aarhus. She is concerned about the visibility and circulation of the research on translation.

email: ester.torres (at) urv.cat